THE FRY ART GALLERY

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2022

This will reach you during the remaining days before we close on 30th October at the end of a very successful season, and is also to remind you of the two remaining events this year - the Annual Exhibition & Sale and a special opening with Christmas shopping in mind, on December 3rd.

The opening of the renovated premises on May 7th gave the first opportunity to see the extended Bawden Room, with wall to wall units giving enhanced opportunities for exhibiting more items than previously. The two exhibitions still on display are ***Regeneration,*** showing the breadth and depth of the Permanent Collection, and ***The Many Sides of Isabel Rawsthorne,*** which has been a revelation to those not previously well acquainted with her work. The publication of Carol Jacobi's definitive biography Out of the Cage: The Art of Isabel Rawsthorne complemented the exhibition, which also includes a study by Giacometti on special loan.

The enlarged building, to a design by John Ready, has met with universal acclamation from visitors, and the new storage area, adjacent to the new Bawden Room, has proved satisfactory. Altogether it has been a good season, and the official opening before an invited gathering of principal donors to the Appeal was carried out on July 24th by Frances Spalding, substituting for Anne Ullmann, the daughter of Eric Ravilious, who was indisposed on the day. The number of visitors has remained at about the same level as last year, but our valued (and publicly appreciated) invigilators report that visitors are staying much longer this year, are asking more questions, and often come some distance specifically to visit the Gallery.

Annual Exhibition & Sale

An invitation for the members' Private View on Saturday 19th November is enclosed, and Nicola Tyler and colleagues who have been inviting entries look forward to welcoming as many as possible to this important fundraising event. They report an exciting response from the invited participants, with new names joining the regular participants who help us maintain the tradition of including a wide range of reputable work at accessible prices. Among those to be represented we would mention Edward Bawden, Eric Ravilious, Paula Rego, Anne Desmet, Simon Carter, Tessa Newcomb, Maggi Hambling, Jonathan Christie (whose donated raffle price has drawn many responses), Jason Gaythorne-Hardy and Perienne Christian. An unusual

entry this year will be ***The Ship of Fools***, an artist's book with linoprints on newspaper, by Carolyn Trant, published in a very limited edition by Parvenu Books.

Our reputation, built-up over the past 35 years and the enthusiastic support we receive over the weekend, is sufficient testimony. And the large number of items accepted means there is likely to be something to attract visitors right up until 3.55pm on Sunday afternoon.

Annual General Meeting held on 24 June 2022

At the AGM held in the Gallery the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended on 31st December 2021 were approved. Copies are obtainable on ***www.fryartgallery.org*** if still required.

The Treasurer, in introducing the report, was able to provide an update on the cost of the Extension Appeal. Additional costs of £9,000 had been identified while further income of £3,000 had been received. Consequently, an additional £6,000 still needs to be raised. The success of the Appeal, masterminded by Martin Gruselle as Treasurer, and the overall evident success of the scheme, was noted and all concerned were thanked for their work. Gordon Cummings, Martin Gruselle, Nicola Tyler and Iris Weaver, as retiring Trustees who had offered themselves for appointment were duly elected.

Gordon Cummings, who had acted as interim Chairman and also as Secretary during the year, was thanked, and Sir Roderick Newton, KC, was introduced as the new Chairman the Trustees had appointed from among their number.

Sir Roderick spoke of how, while at primary school he had been captivated by Bawden's linocut of ***Brighton Pier***, and of his subsequent professional career in law. Links to the Ravilious family after marriage had led to his association with the Gallery, which he held in high esteem for its varied achievements. He thought this was exemplified both in the current ***Regeneration*** exhibition and the extended building. He had been impressed by the team spirit appertaining and looked forward to being involved in the continued success of the venture as it entered its 38th year.

Richard Deeble Legacy

Mr Deeble became a life member of the Society in 2006, on one of his regular visits (with his partner Ivor Idris) from his home in Switzerland. In December 2021 we received notification that he had died in June and that the Fry Art Gallery would receive a legacy under his will. The legacy, in the magnificent sum of £53,141, was received in July 2022. The Trustees are extremely grateful for this unexpected bequest

which, in accordance with Mr Deeble's instructions, has been allocated to our Acquisitions Purchase Fund.

Acquisitions

The Acquisitions Fund was created in 1989 when Edward Bawden left £10,000 in his will and it was decided to enhance this and create a vital bespoke source of income. Since that date we have always kept this account up to date, and, along with grants obtained for specific items from the Art Fund, the Essex Heritage Trust, the Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Fund and the National Heritage Lottery Fund, we have been able to make important additions to the Collection. In addition, we are regularly offered specific items by friends and admirers and these too have served to enhance the Collection, sometimes unusual ones like the most recent, which is the design prepared by Ayrton for the wooden mount for a bronze.

In September we were able to purchase a fourth Ravilious Scrapbook, previously on loan to us, and currently on display in the Bawden Room. Grants from the Art Fund and the V&A Purchase Fund enabled us to be the minority contributor in obtaining this treasure trove of drawings, cuttings, letters, doodles etc - that will be of interest for many years to come. We are now engaged in raising sufficient money to pay for the expensive conservation of this 1920s album, which has degenerated and ultimately threatens its contents thereby.

Sixteen items relating to Isabel Rawsthorne have been received from the estate of her brother, Warwick Llewellyn Nicholas. Other donated items that have been accepted for the Collection have been made by Edward Jackson (***Winter Owls***, Walter Hoyle print); on behalf of Elizabeth Corob (***The Temptation of St Anthony***, gouache, Michael Ayrton); and presented by Jeri Bapasola via the Art Fund (***House in Hadleigh***, watercolour by Richard Bawden). A purchase assisted by the Essex Heritage Trust was made of a late watercolour by Edward Bawden (***Airplant***), an autographed copy of Oxford University Press music score for ***Summer's Last Will & Testament*** set to music by Constant Lambert (Rawsthorne's second husband) and Michael Ayrton (illustrator), and a print by Rothenstein (***Birds IV***) conclude this resumé, which brings the current number of items in the North West Essex Collection to 3,395.

Winter Lecture Series

Uncertainties during the Covid crisis coincided with the retirement due to ill health of Jane Pearson who had so expertly organised the autumn lectures for some years. This year the series has been resurrected to be held during the early months of 2023.

They will be held in the Quaker Meeting House in the High Street, Saffron Walden at 7.30pm and we hope you will enjoy the programme, which features the Directors of two famous Cambridge museums and the founder of the successful project Art UK, who will speak about his latest project *The World of Watercolour*.

27 January	Andrew Nairne, Kettle's Yard	*My Life with Kettles Yard*
17 February	Luke Syson, Fitzwilliam Museum	*Titian*
31 March	Fred Hohler	*The World of Watercolour*

Tickets £6 bookable on the website fryartgallery.org, or at the door.

Lawrence Gooderham (1935-2022)

With sadness we report the death on 9th August of Lawrence Gooderham. Lawrence was among the 80 founding members of the Society and acted originally as Secretary before becoming the Treasurer, where for many years his actuarial skills were best deployed. As a committee member he also provided the wine for private view occasions, revelling in the conversations that ensued with a member, and, a College Bursar in Cambridge, who was the only other person who knew of this link, on the merits or otherwise of the vintage offered. This was typical of the often self-effacing, but sustained support that he gave. In latter years he took on the less exacting role as Treasurer of our sister charity, the North West Essex Collection Trust. He was among the many on whom we gratefully rely to sustain our work.

Archives within the Collection

Items on paper - letters, cuttings, Christmas cards, diaries et al, but relevant to our objectives, have always been accepted for the Collection. During recent years this number has considerably increased, so much so that in 2021 Kate Brown and Simon Gough became the official Archivists, enabling us to take advantage of their experience and expertise, and give proper accord to the importance of these seemingly ephemeral items. Previous Newsletter reports have covered the large quantity of material donated or acquired from the Edward Bawden estate. Indexing and caring for numerous pieces of paper takes time, and the ultimate aim is to digitise everything for ease of reference.

During this year, alongside cataloguing, the first nine of thirty Artists' Boxes have been completed which cover Michael Ayrton, Duffy Ayers, Bernard Cheese, Chloë Cheese, Tirzah Garwood., Isabel Rawsthome, Sheila Robinson, Kenneth Rowntree and Edwin Smith & Olive Cook. The tenth - on Eric Ravilious - constantly fills up. Each box holds an eclectic mix of loose material relating to the artist. An online catalogue has been created in "the cloud" with the aim of enabling easy searching of their contents. A printed hand list will also in due course be available in each box. Not every artist in the Collection has their own box, some where there is very little material to date, are shared and there are two "collective" boxes where material relates to the community of Great Bardfield artists or a project like the Morley College mural.

The Archivists have also been able to add to the on-line archive catalogue the typed records previously completed of items of Bawden's correspondence, and the Christmas cards he had received, and kept in his studio. The latter exercise proved particularly useful as it enabled identification of some of the cards received, as well as others glued to Marianne Straub's scrapbook, which have not always been possible to identify purely on the basis of a Christian name signature.

On-line shopping

We have refreshed our on-line shopping facility, which is reached via our website: fryartgallery.org. We do recommend you to view the range of items because some are only obtainable from the Gallery, having been devised and produced with the aid of Webb & Webb Design, and we do not plan to continue them for ever, but rather try to continue by refreshing the range.

It gives an easy way to purchase, other than by attending personally, six items which have been uniquely produced and marketed by the Society. Five are items based on designs by Eric Ravilious (wood engravings, brooch, apron, child's handkerchief, cushion cover) and the sixth is a cushion cover by Bawden. The wood engravings are in a hand printed and numbered edition of 175. The website also gives details of the popular Richard Bawden tea towels and books (new or rare) that we have for sale. Do visit the site and use the postal sales response facility provided by our colleagues Lesley Nolan and Jane Blewett - and acquire a scarce commodity as well.

The 2023 programme

The Gallery exhibiting season officially begins on the first Saturday in April and the programme currently set for the year is as follows:

Main Gallery : Apl - Oct *Art and Design*
Gibson Room: Apl - Jun *Marianne Straub*
Jul - Oct *The British Neo-Romantics*
Full details will be included in the March 2023 Newsletter.

The Real and the Romantic: English art between two world wars.

It is our practice to conclude, after the "parish notices", with a different item and it is a pleasure to publish a review by Peyton Skipwith of the substantial book published earlier this year by Frances Spalding, who is coincidentally Chairperson of the North West Essex Collection, the charity responsible for the Permanent Collection.
The book is published (384 pp) by Thames & Hudson, £35. Copies are also obtainable using our on-line shop.

Frances Spalding in her excellent new book, ***The Real and the Romantic*** - subtitled English Art Between Two World Wars - comments on the fact that 'English revivalism in the interwar years reactivated a variety of earlier styles, methods and traditions [thus giving] new life to etching, wood engraving and watercolour painting [stimulating] the need to conserve and reanimate the past, and then return to the present and to modernity, [which] became, in some hands, a part of the progressive diversity of this period.' In just over 350 pages and twelve chapters, with titles such as 'Pitiless Realism', 'Modern Art in a Philistine World' and The 'Austere, the Violent or the Strange', she presents in eminently readable form a survey of art south of the border - no Anne Redpath, William Gilles or Scottish colourists for instance - with emphasis on its peculiar Englishness. In this context it may be a surprise to many readers to learn that Winifred Nicholson and her sister-in-law, Nan Roberts, were the first people in Britain to purchase works by Piet Mondrian. Mondrian's influence on both Ben Nicholson and John Piper during the 1930s was strong, encouraged in part by Myfanwy Evans/Piper's editorship of the avant-garde magazine Axis. Happily Spalding ranges widely straying from the well-trodden path to embrace many less well known figures such as the Pipers' friend Frances Hodgkins, the New Zealand born artist who is quoted as declaring 'I personally hate all rigid systems - but then I am a rebel'.

Earlier this year, in her Introduction to James Scott's ***The Women Who Shaped Modern Art in Britain***, Spalding wrote 'One of the questions about art currently under discussion is whether to expand or eliminate the canon', going on to refer to the author's 'feline and more radical approach' to modern art in Britain. One of the many strengths of The Real and the Romantic, in addition to its readability, is that Spalding also adopts this

radical approach to modernism, appreciating, - with twenty-first century hindsight - that scenes of the South Downs by Ravilious were, at the time, seen to be nearly as radically modern as Nicholson's white reliefs. Her familiarity is with the by-ways as well as the highways of the English art world, not just the artists but the whole sub-strata of dealers - Arthur Tooth, Reid & Lefevre, the Leicester Galleries, Freddie Mayor, Lucy Wertheim as well as critics and writers - Roger Fry, Myfanwy Piper, David Gascoyne, Gerard Manley Hopkins - and others, including the etcher F.L. Griggs, Barbara Hepworth's great patron Margaret Gardiner, and the advertising agent Marcus Brumwell.

Of course there are some surprising omissions; Sir George Clausen and Dame Ethel Walker for instance, both of whom painted throughout this period and beyond. During the nineteen-twenties and thirties Clausen pushed the boundaries of traditional landscape virtually to the point of non-figuration, dissolving the form of his beloved Essex landscape in early morning mist or contre-jour in the face of the rising sun. Not so far removed in spirit, rather than form, from Piper's Coast in Wales, which he sent to the London Gallery's 1939 exhibition 'Living Art in England', describing himself in the catalogue as 'a cubist, abstract, constructivist, surrealist independent.' Not a bad description of the period as a whole. It is a delight to see in these pages such largely neglected figures as Claud Lovat Fraser, James Fitton, Charles Ginner, Mary Potter and many more making an appearance in these pages, as well as McKnight Kauffer, whose radical poster and book-jacket designs have, in the past, often been unjustly ignored on the grounds that they are design rather than 'serious' art. Spalding, in her broad-mindedness follows in the footsteps of Roger Fry who, in his 1934 Reflections on British Painting, proudly upheld 'the value of our national distaste for coercion in matters of opinion.'

Peyton Skipwith

Hugh Belsey-12 illustrated talksThe English Country House
Hugh Belsey's sixth series of erudite talks commence during the week beginning October 24th at five venues (including Saffron Walden on Tuesday afternoons) plus Zoom.

Details are on ***www.hughbelsey.com*** or email ***hugh.belsey1@gmail.com.***

GIFTS SALE

Saturday 3rd December

10.30am - 1pm

The Gallery will be open giving an opportunity to view and buy gifts made exclusively for the Fry Art Gallery including:

- Ravilious design brooches
- Ravilious wood-engravings hand-printed from the original blocks in the Collection
- Ravilious child's handkerchief
- Ravilious design cushion cover
- Bawden design cushion cover
- Richard Bawden tea towels
- Drawings by Edwin Smith and Olive Cook and other artists
- New and second-hand books

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THE FRY ART GALLERY

SAFFRON WALDEN

The Fry Art Gallery's Online Shop is always open!

We sell a range of unusual textile products inspired by Edward Bawden & Eric Ravilious, exclusive to the Gallery, as well as Richard Bawden's beautiful tea towels.

Books and catalogues relating to the artists held in the North West Essex Collection are also available online, and postage is a flat rate of £3.50 to anywhere in the UK.

All make ideal gifts - do take a look!

www.fryartgallery.org

Every purchase supports The Fry Art Gallery

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